



Value of Volunteer Time

Calculating the dollar value of your volunteer's efforts

What is the value?

In the U.S., the estimated dollar value of volunteer time for 2014 is \$23.07 per hour. (**Indiana - \$22.34**) Values are also established state by state (from Arkansas - \$19.31 to Washington, DC - \$39.86)[2014]

The estimate helps acknowledge the millions of individuals who dedicate their time, talents, and energy to making a difference. Charitable organizations can use this estimate to quantify the enormous value volunteers provide.

According to the Corporation for National and Community Service, about 62.6 million Americans, or 25.4 percent of the adult population, gave 7.7 billion hours of volunteer service worth \$173 billion in 2013. For the latest information, please see www.volunteeringinamerica.gov or www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time.

How the numbers are calculated

The value of volunteer time is based on the hourly earnings (approximated from yearly values) of all production and non-supervisory workers on private non-farm payrolls average (based on yearly earnings provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) for the national average. Independent Sector indexes this figure to determine state values and increases it by 12 percent to estimate for fringe benefits.

Charitable organizations most frequently use the value of volunteer time for recognition events or communications to show the amount of community support an organization receives from its volunteers.

According to the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB), the value of volunteer services can also be used on financial statements -- including statements for internal and external purposes, grant proposals, and annual reports -- only if a volunteer is performing a specialized skill for a nonprofit. The general rule to follow when determining if contributed services meet the FASB criteria for financial forms is to determine whether the organization would have purchased the services if they had not been donated. Accounting specialists may visit FASB's website for regulations on use of the value of volunteer time on financial forms: <http://www.fasb.org/pdf/fas116.pdf>.

It is very difficult to put a dollar value on volunteer time. Volunteers provide many intangibles that can not be easily quantified. For example, volunteers demonstrate the amount of support an organization has within a community, provide work for short periods of time, and provide support on a wide range of projects.

The value of volunteer time presented here is the average wage of non-management, non-agricultural workers. This is only a tool and only one way to show the immense value volunteers provide to an organization. The Bureau of Labor Statistics does have [hourly wages by occupation](http://www.bls.gov/publications/specialreports/2008/sr31.pdf) that can be used to determine the value of a specialized skill.

It is important to remember that when a doctor, lawyer, craftsman, or anyone with a specialized skill volunteers, the value of his or her work is based on his or her volunteer work, not his or her earning power. In other words, volunteers must be performing their special skill as volunteer work. If a doctor is painting a fence or a lawyer is sorting groceries, he or she is not performing his or her specialized skill for the nonprofit, and their volunteer hour value would not be higher.

¹Latest figure from 2014 Bureau of Labor Statistics data, indexed by Independent Sector in March 2015.

²Corporation for National and Community Service. "Research Brief: Volunteering in America Research Highlights" (2013).

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